

DATA LABEL: PUBLIC



VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY PANEL

VOLUNTARY SECTOR GATEWAY WEST LOTHIAN UPDATE

REPORT BY HEAD OF PLANNING, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND REGENERATION

A. PURPOSE OF REPORT

The purpose of this report is to update the panel on the current activities being undertaken by Voluntary Sector Gateway West Lothian in providing an effective single point of access for support and advice and representing the interests of voluntary and community groups within West Lothian.

B. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the panel:

1. Notes the positive outcomes in regard to the work undertaken by Voluntary Sector Gateway West Lothian in supporting and representing the interests of voluntary and community groups within West Lothian.

C. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

I Council Values	Focusing on our customers' needs. Being honest, open and accountable. providing equality of opportunities; developing employees; making best use of our resources; working in partnership.
II Policy and Legal (including Strategic Environmental Assessment, Equality Issues, Health or Risk Assessment)	The report does not raise any health or risk assessment issues. No strategic environmental assessment is required.
III Implications for Scheme of Delegations to Officers	None.
IV Impact on performance and performance Indicators	None
V Relevance to Single Outcome Agreement	We live in resilient, cohesive and safe communities.
VI Resources - (Financial, Staffing and Property)	£48,770 has been awarded to VSGWL from the Voluntary Organisations budget for 2021/22.

VII Consideration at PDSP

The Voluntary Organisations PDSP is updated on a quarterly basis.

VIII Other consultations

None.

D. TERMS OF THE REPORT

D.1 Background

The role of the third sector interface (TSI) is to provide an effective single point of access for support and advice for the third sector within a local area. It is expected that the TSI will provide a strong cohesive conduit between the third sector and the local authority and Community Planning Partnership (CPP) and that it is well managed, governed and effective.

The TSI operating in West Lothian is the Voluntary Sector Gateway West Lothian (VSGWL). The VSGWL is a member of the West Lothian CPP. VSGWL receives a grant from the Scottish Government Third Sector Unit and received £48,770 from West Lothian Council in 2021/22.

D.2 Current update

An update from the Voluntary Sector Gateway West Lothian is attached as Appendix 1.

E CONCLUSION

The panel is asked to note the report but the Voluntary Sector Gateway West Lothian and that the PDSP will receive regular updates going forward.

F. BACKGROUND REFERENCES

None.

Appendices/Attachments: none

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Craig McCorriston,
Head of Planning Economic Development and Regeneration

03 February 2022



*Promoting, Supporting and Developing
West Lothian's Voluntary Sector*

Progress report on Voluntary Sector Gateway West Lothian (VSGWL)

To be presented at Voluntary Organisations Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel on the 3rd February 2022.

- We continue to deliver on our outcomes on building capacity of the sector, volunteering and capturing the voice of the sector.
- Representatives from the Third Sector are continuing to work closely with Council Officials as part of a funding Working Group.
 - The Group continues to support the Voluntary Orgs Revenue Budget decision-making process and discussing ways of improving arrangements moving forward.
 - Third sector representation will be revisited in light of a forthcoming change in membership.
 - Evaluation of the training requirements of the sector is ongoing.

Community Mental health and wellbeing funding

The Scottish Government announced a new £15m Communities Mental Health and Wellbeing Fund in Autumn 2021. The £470K Fund for West Lothian is aimed at small, grass roots community organisations that support individuals experiencing inequalities, mental health, trauma etc.

VSGWL worked closely with colleagues in Health and Social Care Partnership, West Lothian Council and Community Planning Partnership, to develop the guidance and application forms. The fund was launched on 26 November 2021.

The primary ambition is to ensure a broad reach across range of small West Lothian community-based organisations through the distribution of smaller value grants between £2k - £10k and a larger grant for applications from £10k - £50k. The funding seeks to address the following needs;

- Social Isolation and loneliness:
- Suicide prevention:
- Unpaid Carers:

The Fund also aims to address the following mental health inequalities;

- Asylum seekers and refugees
- Care experienced adults
- BAME communities

- Homeless/ rough sleepers
- People who have experienced bereavement
- People who are or have been on the NHS shielding list
- People affected by violence, including sexual.

Two funding rounds are planned in 2021/22. The application process in Phase 1 closed on 14 January 2021 and was significantly oversubscribed. Assessment panels with colleagues in West Lothian Council and NHS Lothian are currently reviewing applications.

Subject to parliamentary approval of the 2022/23 Scottish budget, it is hoped this will be a recurring fund. Further information is expected in the coming weeks.

Research highlighting sector fatigue

A wide ranging survey of third sector leaders across Scotland paints a stark picture of the reality of being a Third Sector leader.

The [Third Sector leadership survey](#) conducted by ACOSVO (the Association of Chief Officers of Scottish Voluntary Organisations), has highlighted burnout and fatigue amongst CEOs and leaders. This could be a risk to the sector locally and we have already seen the effects of this with a number of leaders leaving the sector completely or changing roles.

Last year, a confidential peer to peer support forum through our Third Sector Strategy Group (TSSG) structure was established to address concerns. Plans are underway to consult on re-establishing the forum.

No One Left Behind (NOLB) policy developments

A Third sector Employability Forum has been recently been established in West Lothian. The forum seeks to strengthen the work of the Local Employability Partnership (LEP) in better understanding the role of the third sector and in supporting employability services moving forward. This follows wider policy developments around NOLB and the Young Person Guarantee.

Plans to develop a terms of reference for the forum, along with position of Chair and secretariat support are underway.

Hustings proposal

At a recent TSSG meeting, it was proposed to hold a hustings event with the third sector for candidates putting themselves forward at the May local Elections.

Support to alleviate pressures on NHS

All TSIs, including VSGWL, have been asked by Deputy First Minister and Health Minister to work closely with NHS and HSCP colleagues to help alleviate pressures on A&E Departments and to support hospital discharge arrangements.

Local meetings with HSCP partners have just been established to consider the potential role of the third sector and volunteers in supporting the work of statutory partners for individuals being discharged from hospital.

VSGWL staffing update

Two vacant posts within VSGWL have been filled following a successful recruitment campaign. A new Development Officer (Partnerships) has been appointed and took up post in mid-January. The post of Operations Manager has also been filled and successful applicant starts on 31 January.

Both roles will further strengthen the support VSGWL can offer to statutory and third sector partners moving forward.

Presented by Alan McCloskey
Chief Executive Officer
VSGWL

24 January 2022